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First ever Michigan Adoption Day to be held in Ionia County

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By DANIELLE JONES, Sentinel-Standard writer

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IONIA -- For parents wishing to adopt a newborn baby, the adoption process can be long and complicated. However, the Ionia County Circuit Court, Family Division wants Michigan residents to be aware of other adoption options that could save potential parents a lot of waiting.

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The second annual National Adoption Day will take place in November, and the state of Michigan will join in the events for the first time for Michigan Adoption Day, which will take place Tuesday, Nov. 25. Ionia County Circuit Court will participate in the inaugural event, which will try to raise awareness of the thousands of Michigan children who are available for adoption through the state, and also celebrate adoptions that have already taken place.

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Events for the Ionia County adoption celebration will include the finalization of at least ten adoptions, as well as informational displays for potential parents. The court will also be holding a celebratory event for the families adopting that day.

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"The fact is that many Michigan children are waiting to be adopted," said Lisa Arnold, Deputy Family Court Clerk.

The state of Michigan had 19,490 children in foster care in 2002, and 12,673 children were temporary wards of the court as a result of child protective proceedings during that year.

Out of that number, 4,615 permanent state wards were available for adoptions, but only 2,833 adoptions were finalized in 2002.

Arnold said that many of the children available for adoption are older children, or they may have behavioral problems or special needs due to a physical disability.

"They have a lot of needs. (Adopting them) takes someone who's willing to put in a lot of time," Arnold said. She added that many

potential parents want only newborn, white children, but the majority of children on the state list just don't fit that stipulation.

Another deterrent to adopting through the state is the relative ease of adopting a child from overseas, Arnold said. Many parents are now choosing to adopt from other countries because they are mostly guaranteed to receive a newborn baby. Arnold said the adoption process isn't quick or easy no matter where the adoption takes place, but she has seen more and more adoptions from overseas rather than within the United States.

Arnold said she hopes the Michigan Adoption Day will help people to understand the adoption process more, and to make them aware that there are many children in Michigan who are in need of a permanent, loving home.

She added that the Ionia County Circuit Court is attempting to make the day special for the families adopting that day. They hope to have a Supreme Court Justice visit the court, and they will have an area set up for adopting families to get together and have refreshments following the finalization of their adoption proceedings.

Michigan Adoption Day events will take place at the Ionia County Circuit Courthouse from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 25. Information on the adoption process will be available for anyone interested.

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